with bread which he afterwards ate, such was the general mistrust and fear of poisoning. The talisman was long used at table: it was laid beneath glass or plate. 000

In the 15th century, Vienna cooking was considered to be among the best in Europe, and when the Viennese went to war, he took his best cooks to camp with him. The doughty Capuchin monk Abraham a Santa Clara more than once flew into a passion over Viennese gormandizing. He was not surprised, he said in one of his sermons, that house and farm were so often ruined because of the owner's overeating and that the noble soul was suppressed by the fat paunch.

DAYS OF SPLENDOUR. Splendour and luxury reached their climax in Austria in Leopoldian times, under Karl VI, under Prince Eugene and during the days of the Vienna Congress. Table decoration was a special feature of every official banquet. Fantastic shapes in sugar-icing, arabesques, ornamentation and groups of merry figures were the fashion in the days of great court banquets. The arrangement of the dishes competed with the table decorations; roasted doves and chickens, for instance, would be grouped about a pelican made of baked bread. 264 252

In this decorative period, they went so far as to produce gilded sucking-pigs. Astonishing pastry ships were filled with fruits of marzipan: the latter are still popular today. At other times table fireworks competed with disguised foods and artistic creations such as statues, fountains and castles of edible materials. Many confectioners of the period were trained sculptors.

The most luxurious days for the city were those of the Vienna Congress. Entertainment at the Imperial Court cost 50,000 gulden a day. The wealthy Austrian aristocratic families gave banquets to as many as 700 guests at a time, one day in the week being reserved for such brilliant affairs. 648 574

The so-called table d'hôte was never a success in Vienna. To these "Landlords tables" a certain number of people came at a fixed hour in order to partake of a meal which was served to everyone simultaneously at a fixed price. He who could eat quickest with the smallest regard for others was at an advantage, but as the Viennese dislike haste at mealtimes, the tables d'hôte were little patronised. 265

Apart from the customary eating-houses, there were also what were called the "tracteurs". Here one could eat at any time between eleven a. m. and three p. m., lunch costing up to a gulden according to what was chosen. The customers were drawn from a wide range of social classes. The manager stood in the middle of the room like a major commanding his troops and gave his orders to the waiters. The eaters sat packed together like sardines, gulped down their food and were quickly replaced by others.

In biedermeier times the middle classes lived most of their lives at home in the bosom of the family, where they also entertained guests, and took little interest in appearing in public. For this reason their history is bound up with family tradition. Their way of life and customs inspired an art style which embodied and preserved 565 593

565 them. Although the Viennese woman, superficially regarded, may have achieved
593 the emancipation of the self-supporting woman later than those of other countries, she early became the unchallenged and particularly respected representative of a well-defined and charming type of culture in the family, the home and in her salon. The average middle-class woman in Vienna has always lavished her imagination, her good taste, her emotions and her love on the home and its cultured atmosphere.
264 The famous Viennese "Gemütlichkeit" (comfort) is eternally to her credit. This was not difficult for her to achieve in the days of plenty, but she has the art of lending the poetic touch to the simplest meal. A snow-white tablecloth, a tasteful vase with flowers, an old china service, the dainty mat for a wine bottle and a touch of greenery as decoration can make the plainest meal attractive. Or the cobwebby tablecloth of the Vienna Jause (tea table) with the hand-painted biedermeier cups, the charmingly arranged flowers, the sugary white and crisp "Guglhupf" (a sort of sponge-cake) in the centre and the aromatic coffee combine to bring a welcome break in the daily round.

265 This is also the reason why the restaurants in Vienna are less frequented than in other big cities. The stranger who remains more than a week in Vienna looks for private lodgings. If he is a man of name and position he soon finds acquaintances and free board. It was the custom when making a longer stay for a visitor to rent a room for the month and to eat only in restaurants.

511 In Vienna everything was cheaper than in most other cities. Karl Julius Weber wrote:—"Where is the great city where a philosopher may live so pleasantly for such a small sum of money and a man of the world can enjoy the fashionable world for an expenditure of 3,000 to 4,000 gulden? In any case one can live in Vienna twice as well as elsewhere with half as much money."

565 Glasbrenner writes with enthusiasm of Vienna:—"The Viennese is above all
181 a human being. In Vienna there is hardly a trace of class-consciousness, for in the same tavern lackeys and cab drivers sit next to artists, rich citizens and merchants,

Friesland farmer. The Emperor Leopold served him wine in a costly crystal chalice, begging him to accept the latter as a gift.

In the year 1678, when Prince Johann Georg of Anhalt-Dessau appeared at such a Wirtschaft at the Vienna Imperial Court in the guise of a Dutch sailor, Emperor Leopold toasted him with the words: "Since I believe that nobody knows more about the wind than a Dutch sailor, I drink his health with the wish that the wind may be favourable to the Roman Empire, to my House and to yourself, in accordance with whatever you may desire."

All royal personages, male and female enjoyed taking part in these Wirtschaften. A lot of thought went to devising the menu, and amusing ideas were often introduced into it.

265 The oldest eating house of Vienna is supposed to be the Griechenbeisl on the Fleischmarkt, dating back to the year 1500. If one drank more than two glasses of beer one had to keep the reckoning by laying the appropriate number of matches on the table; some had quite a little pile to show before the evening was over. Even the "liebe Augustin", the forerunner of the public singer who was himself born at Vienna in 1643 as the son of a tavern keeper, played the bagpipes there and sang there his famous tragi-comic song:

[533]

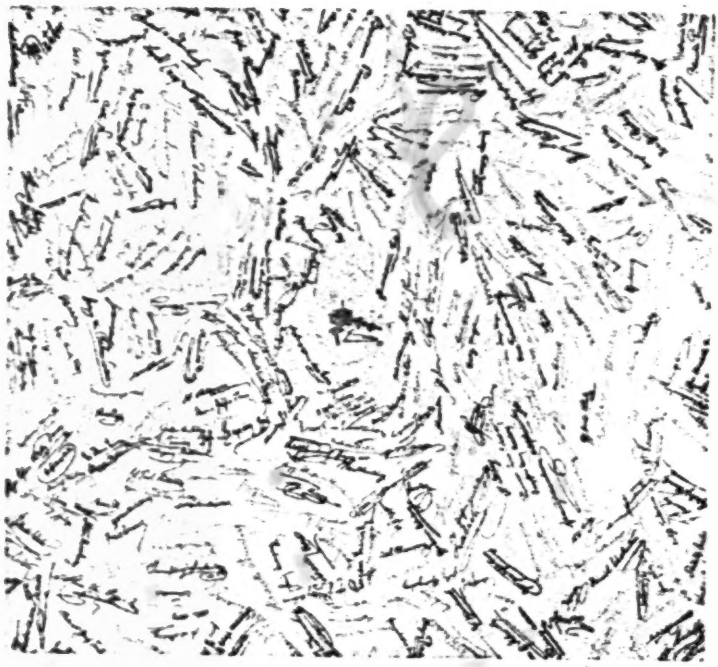
"O, du lieber Augustin, alles ist hin ..."

It is a far cry from him to the "Schrammelmusik" and beyond to Girardi and his immortal carriage song. The Matschakerhof, which is also mentioned in the 15th century, is about as old as the Griechenbeisl.

During the Vienna Congress the attachés of the various Powers met regularly for lunch at the hotel "Kaiserin von Österreich", which soon received the name of "Diplomatenbörse" (Diplomat's Exchange). The table reserved for them in this hotel was called the "Chronicle of Vienna". Here confidential cabinet questions were discussed during informal conversations and events of the day talked over of which the Press only learned very much later.

"Die drei Hacken", later called the "Römische Kaiser", was adjudged Vienna's most exclusive tavern in Congress times. Unfortunately it no longer exists. On its site stands the building of an insurance company in the Renngasse.

The Hotel Sacher was frequented by members of the Austrian court and aristocracy. In its garden, the old Austrian uniforms struck the dominating note. The hotel's exquisite cuisine was renowned; the owner, Frau Anna Sacher, was a well-known figure in Vienna. Like Danish women, she smoked cigars, not little cigarillos but big, fat cigars. She had the gift of making all her guests feel at home and well understood how to flatter the peculiarities of each one, to satisfy every wish and to remember a guest's favourite dishes. Sachers, because of its distinguished clientèle, became the first hotel in Vienna, and was often the scene of meetings which decided the fate of Europe. The diplomats of the whole world were numbered



Vienna. Hotel Sacher: the "Signature Table Cloth" with the names of famous personages.

among its guests. They still show the menu there which the unhappy Crown Prince Rudolf wrote out himself for a dinner he ordered there a few days before his death: Oysters, turtle soup, lobster cotelette à l'Americain, blue trout with Venetian sauce, ragout of quails, French poulard, salad, cheese. To drink with it he ordered Chablis, Mouton-Rothschild, Röderer-Crystall and Sherry Superieur. The famous tablecloth which served as a guest-book is a treasure of the House. More than 140 of the most distinguished guests have recorded their signatures here. These autographs on a white damask cloth were embroidered by Anna Sacher herself.

Franz Schubert used to frequent the "Ungarische Krone". A circle was formed there which was called the "Canevas Society", because Schubert's constant question

265

on entry of a newcomer was: "Kann er was?" ("Can he do anything?") To this circle belonged Schwind, Schnorr, Bauernfeld, Lacbner and others.

The Prater restaurants are peculiar to Vienna. Some of them rank as "noble establishments" because of their higher prices. Prosperity first came to them when the "Baumenkorso" was instituted in biedermeier times. When people are happy, they generally behave well; in Vienna the contrast between grinding poverty and great luxury is not so sharply defined as in most other cities. The Vienna Prater offers happiness, recreation and comfort to all classes. An ice-cream at the Eisvogel, a cup of coffee in the Sacher Pavilion or a bite at the Lusthaus was always within the reach of many.

On the left hand side of the main avenue of the Prater, coming from the City, you see one coffee house after another. What the poet Adalbert Stifter wrote of them in 1844 is still true: "From each of them comes the strains of music. Under the trees are many thousands of seats filled with people in their best clothes. There is a laughing, a talking, a clinking of glasses, and before the eyes of the crowds the elegant carriages roll along the avenue, which stretches away with no end as far as the eye can see."

275

Vienna is very well off for cafés. It was from Vienna that coffee set forth on its conquest of the world. In 1683, after the city had been liberated from the Turks, large quantities of coffee beans were discovered which the invaders had left behind.

The Pole Kolschitzky, who had done valuable work during the siege, was presented with the strange beans as a reward. In a house which was placed at his disposal for the purpose he opened the first coffee house called "Zur blauen Flasche".

Vienna has always cherished the old Arabic saying to the effect that coffee must be black as night, sweet as love and hot as Hell. Coffee house life sprang quickly and definitely into being. To the question